

The Old Paths

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"How Will God Feel When You Die?"

Jarrold Jacobs

God is not oblivious to the goings-on of men. He knows who we are, and what we are doing. Solomon said, *"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good"* (Prov. 15:3). Jesus said, *"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows"* (Matt. 10:29-31). Based on these verses, as well as others, we know that God is aware of us, and knows when we leave this earth. Now, how will God feel when YOU die? Will He be

SAD: *"As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?"* (Ezek. 33:11). *"Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?"* (Ezek. 18:23) It is evident that there are some whose death will bring a sadness to Him as He sees people dying in their sin. We are His creation (Gen. 1:26-27; Rev. 4:11), and God does not want to see anyone perish (II Pet. 3:9) when they have yet to take advantage of the opportunities God has provided and are not saved.

GLAD: *"Precious in the sight of*

the LORD is the death of his saints" (Ps. 116:15). *"He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight"* (Ps. 72:13-14). When seeing a righteous person leave this life, God looks upon that death as precious. This one has not wasted his life and opportunities, but has taken advantage of opportunities God has provided and death comes as a welcome release from the hardships of this life.

Why did God make this distinction as He saw people die? The difference in God's response to a men's deaths is seen in the relationship with God in life! If a man died as a sinner or wicked, then God's view of his death was one of sadness. If a man died as a saint or righteous, then God's view of His death was described as a "precious" death.

Knowing that death comes to us all (Heb. 9:27). Knowing that it is wise to number our days (Ps. 90:12), then let us make sure we are in that right relationship with God while we live. Now is our "second chance" — there is no guarantee of tomorrow (II Cor. 6:2).

How can a man make sure his death is "precious" to God? He can do so by becoming a Christian! One becomes a Christian by believing in Christ as God's Son (Jn. 8:24), repenting of his sins (Lk. 13:3), confessing Christ as the Son of God (Rom. 10:10), and being baptized for the remission of sins (Mk. 16:16). How you done this? Are you preparing for eternity?

"Choose The Church Of Your Choice" — Is This A Scriptural Phrase?

Jarrold Jacobs

Probably one of the most familiar phrases heard among people today is: "choose the church of your choice." Billy Graham and others like him through the years have said this. Most newspapers have such an admonition in their "religion" section or "religion" page. In fact, this is one of the "politically correct" things to say these days. To reinforce this belief of choosing the "church of your choice", many people are taught to be saved and then go join the church that they choose. We have heard many times on the TV, radio, and other media that "so-and-so church is what you are looking for" and other similar phrases. In fact, there is a church in Franklin, TN that put on their sign, "The People's Church." Does the Bible teach such a thing? Has God said that one can be saved and then go join the church of his choice? Does God sanction each and every organization that has "church" on their sign? Is He the author or promoter of these groups that teach different and conflicting doctrines? What saith the Scripture?

There Is Only One Church Mentioned In The Bible.

It is important for us to note that when the New Testament speaks of the church, it is mentioned consistently in the singular. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus called her *"my church."* In Acts 2:47, the Lord added the saved to *"the church."* Paul called her *"the church of God"* (Acts

20:28). Christ is *"head of ... the church"* (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22). Paul said, *"Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its savior. ... the church is subject unto Christ, Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for her; That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, That he might present her to himself a glorious church, ... that she might be holy and without blemish"* (Eph. 5:23-27). Please reread these verses, and note the fact that the Lord's church is singular in nature!

When Does One Become A Member Of The Lord's Church?

Does the Bible teach that one can be saved one day, and then "choose their church" another day? The apostle Luke records that after the 3000 were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-41), that many continued to submit to God's plan of salvation. In Acts 2:47 we read, *"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."* Here, we find the Lord doing the adding to His church, and it happened when folks were saved! God adds only the saved to the church, and adds none of the unsaved to His church. One can only be a part of His church when he is saved from his sins; and this adding is done at that moment of salvation. There is no getting around this.

What About All The Churches Mentioned In The New Testament?

Yes, there are several churches mentioned in the Bible. These include the churches at Ephesus and Corinth, the churches of Galatia, the church at Rome, Philippi, etc. However, this does not mean that

they were all different denominations teaching different and conflicting doctrines! These local congregations were composed of people who had been saved (Acts 2:38), and then banded together in a local area in order to do the work God gave them to do. When they did this, they were still the *"church of God"* (I Cor. 1:2) or the *"churches of Christ"* (Rom. 16:16). In fact, it is only in the local church setting that we find one (Paul) *"joining"* the church at Jerusalem (Acts 9:26). In doing so, he was not taking his pick among Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Community Church, etc. Rather, since he had been saved (Acts 22:16), and been added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47), he had a desire to be a member of a local congregation of God's people. They knew nothing of denominational divisions in the first century, but only of the Lord's church (Rom. 16:16). This is all that existed in the first century!

Conclusion

Talk of joining the church of one's choice only breeds confusion and discord. Seeing that God is not the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33); we know He cannot be behind the denominations of this world. If we are going to please God, we are going to have to be a

part of the church of GOD'S choice rather than our own! Jesus established and purchased only one church (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28). He is the head of only one church (Col. 1:18). The Bible teaches that it is this church or kingdom which will one day be delivered up to God at the end of time (I Cor. 15:24). Therefore, we better make sure we are a part of that one church if we are going to please God and spend eternity with Him in Heaven!

"Points With A Punch!"

- ♦ Never put a question mark where God has put a period.
- ♦ If you are too busy to assemble with the Lord's people, you are overworked.
- ♦ Some say a little talk with Jesus makes it right, but Paul had a little talk and had to *"arise and be baptized"* (Acts 22:16).
- ♦ People who are spiritually blind rely on feeling for Heaven.
- ♦ A hundred people will search the woods for a lost boy but won't move an inch to save a soul.
- ♦ Some folks have more of their "thinks-so's" than the Lord's "say-so's" in their religion.

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